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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.

A THIRD SYSTEM OF SYMBOLS FOR THE HEBREW VOWELS AND ACCENTS.

DR. NEUBAUER, in his "Literary Gleanings, XII." (JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, No. 26, p. 361, *sqq.*) calls attention to various kinds of abbreviations which were in use among the Jews of the Middle Ages. Incidentally reference is made to two fragments of Bible texts found lately in Egypt, and acquired by the Bodleian Library, as showing a different kind of shorthand writing, and eight lines are given as an example of what these fragments contain. At first the reader is bewildered, not knowing what to understand by the disconnected letters and the strange points and lines. A closer examination, however, and a minute comparison with the Biblical text, discloses the most important results, *that we have here a new, hitherto unknown system of signs for vowels and accents.* I am only sorry that not more of the text has been published, as there is some doubt in a few cases as to the correctness of the number and position of the points. An inspection of the whole fragments may perhaps modify a little my view, but not to a great extent. Dr. Neubauer was good enough to copy for me three more verses, all that I asked for. The following tables will show the value of each of these signs, and their equivalent in the ordinary system of vowels and accents in our Hebrew books:—

A.—VOWELS.

			Their form		How often each of these signs occurs in the 11 verses.
			in the Ordinary System.	in the Fragments.	
Kamets	...	...	ⲕ̣	ⲕ̣-	21
Pathach	...	...	ⲕ̣ ^o	ⲕ̣ ^o	25
Segol	...	...	ⲕ̣̣	ⲕ̣̣	4
Chirek	...	...	ⲕ̣̣̣	ⲕ̣̣̣	4
Cholem	...	...	ⲕ̣̣̣ or ⲕ̣̣̣̣	ⲕ̣̣̣̣	7
Shurek	...	...	ⲕ̣̣̣̣ or ⲕ̣̣̣̣̣	ⲕ̣̣̣̣̣	4
Tsere	...	...	ⲕ̣̣̣̣̣	ⲕ̣̣̣̣̣̣	6

B.—ACCENTS.

	Their form		How often each of these signs occurs in the 11 verses.
	in the Ordinary System.	in the Fragments.	
Rebia	רְבִי	רְבִי	5
Gershaim	גֶּרְשָׁאִים	גֶּרְשָׁאִים	1
Zakef Katan	זָכֵף	זָכֵף	4
Tipcha	טִפְכָּה	טִפְכָּה	17
Tebhir	טֵבְחִיר	טֵבְחִיר	5
Pashta	פָּשְׁטָה	פָּשְׁטָה or פָּשְׁטָה	9 and 2
Yethib	יֵתִיב	יֵתִיב	1
Munach & Mahpach	מִנַּח	מִנַּח or מִנַּח	6
Darga	דָּרְגָּה	דָּרְגָּה	2
Mercha	מֵרְחָה	מֵרְחָה	9
Zakef gadol	זָכֵף גָּדוֹל	זָכֵף זָכֵף	1
Pesik	פֶּסֶק	פֶּסֶק	2
Makkef	מַכְכֵּף	מַכְכֵּף	5

There is no sign for *silluk*, nor for *athnah*, unless the extra mark over the פּ in רַצְפָּה (8th verse) be meant for this accent. *Dagesh* and *rafeh* are not marked.

The vowels and accents agree, on the whole, with the text in the ordinary editions of the Bible, with the following exceptions: the fragments have בְּמִלְחָמָה, מִנַּח and יֵרָאֵה, instead of בְּמִלְחָמָה, מִנַּח and יֵרָאֵה (8th, 7th, and 11th verses).

It appears strange that one symbol should represent a vowel and an accent: *Shurek* and *pashta*; whilst, on the other hand, one accent, *pashta*, is represented by two different signs, according as it precedes *mahpach*, or follows it. I think that a difference existed, and was marked by a slight variation in the position or the size of the points. Old age, may to some extent have obliterated these distinctions by reducing the size and the number of points, by turning small strokes into dots, and breaking up small lines into points; time seems to have attacked also the letters, and made some of them appear in a different garb. In the 1st verse—in the text published *l.c.*—*e.g.* time has changed, I conjecture, שֶׁ into שֶׁ, the first ק in the 6th into ק, ה in the 5th into ה, deprived מ and the third כ in the 7th verse of their accents, and is perhaps the cause that ת (1st

verse and 6th) is read for ך, ך for ך (in the 5th and 8th), and that *munach* is reduced in some cases to a simple vertical line.

The text of these fragments seems to have been intended as a help for readers in the Synagogue or learners in the schools, enabling them to read in accordance with the traditional pronunciation and modulation, and at the same time warning against mistakes likely to be made, especially by beginners, in the reading of texts without vowel-points and accents; e.g. the *kamets* of *vav* in וָאֵרָאָה (3rd verse), וְשִׁירָה (9th and 10th), is pointed out in order that the *vav* should not be read with *sheva*, and, *vice versâ*, the *sheva* in לְאָחָד is to prevent the reading of the *lamed* with *kamets*. *Mercha* and *tipcha* are marked most frequently, because they are very easily mistaken the one for the other.

A careful examination of the text—for the facilitating of which I add the text in full—proves that, from this point of view, the writer of the fragments has selected the syllables most judiciously.

* * The larger letters with the points and strokes are those contained in the fragments, the smaller ones I added in order to illustrate the relation of the fragments to the Biblical text.

1 הָיוּ מְגִיעֵי בֵית בְּבֵית שְׂדֵה בְּשֵׂדָה יִקְרִיבוּ עוֹד אִפְסֵי מִקוֹם
וְהוֹשִׁבְתָּם לְבִדְבָם בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ

2 בְּאֶזְנוֹי יִי צְבָאוֹת אֵם-לֵא בָתִּים רַבִּים לְשִׁמְחָה יִהְיוּ גְדֻלִּים
וּמִזִּבְיָם מִזִּבְיָן וְיִשָּׁב •

3 בְּשֶׁנֶת-מִוִּת הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲזִיחֵו וָאֵרָאָה אֶת אֲדֹנִי יִשָּׁב עַל כִּפָּא
רָם וְנִשָּׂא וּשְׁלִיו מִלָּאִים אֶת הָחִיכֵל

4 שְׂרָפִים עֲמָדִים • מִמֶּעַל לוֹ עֵשׂ כְּנָפִים עֵשׂ כְּנָפִים לְאֶחָד
בְּשֶׁתִּים • יִכְסֶה פָנָיו וּבְשֶׁתִּים יִכְסֶה רַגְלָיו וּבְשֶׁתִּים
יַעֲרֹף

5 וְקָרָא זֶה אֵל זֶה וְאָמַר קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יִי צְבָאוֹת
מִלָּא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ

6 וְיִנְעֹו אֲמוֹת הַסָּפִים מִקוֹל הַקּוֹרָא וְהַפִּית יִמְלֵא עֵשׂן

7 וְאָמַר אוֹיְלִי כִי נִדְמִיתִי כִי אֵישׁ טָמֵא שִׁפְתָּיִם אֲנִכִּי
וּבְתוֹד עֵם-טָמֵא שִׁפְתָּיִם אֲנִכִּי יִשָּׁב כִּי אֶת-הַמֶּלֶךְ יִי
צְבָאוֹת רָאוּ עֵינִי

8 וַיֵּעַף אֱלִי אֶחָד מִן הַשְּׂרָפִים וּבִידּוֹ רִצְפָּה בְּמַלְקָהִים
לָקַח מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

9 וַיֵּגַע עַל פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נִגָּע זֶה עַל-שַׁפְתִּיד וְסָר עֹנֵד
וְחִמָּאתָךְ תִּכָּפֵר

10 בַּחצִּים וּפְקֻשֶׁת יבֹא שְׁמָה כִּי-שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית תַּהִיָּה כֹל הָאָרֶץ

11 וְכָל הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּעֲרָר יִעְדְּרוּן לֹא תִבָּוֵא שְׁמָה יִרְאֵת
שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית וְהָיָה לַמַּשְׁלָח שׁוֹר וּלְמִרְמָס שָׁה

Dr. Neubauer communicated to me the following solution suggested by Dr. Simonsen, of Copenhagen. He considers the letters in these fragments as Masoretic mnemonics, and believes that the letters in the 1st verse indicate the passages of the Bible in which *בשדה* (without article) occurs, and those of the 3rd verse the passages in Isaiah containing *ישב* without *vav*, viz. 1st verse *עזשתכ* = *נעברה* (Num. xx. 17), *חברו* (in a similar context, *ib.* 21, 22), *שדה* (Isa. v. 8), *רור*, (Ruth ii. 8), *כלתה* (*ib.* ii. 22). 3rd verse: *ושסר נשללה* = *ו* of *ושסר נשללה* (wanting): *אדני* (Isa. vi. 1), *שפתים* (*ib.* vi. 5), *אל* (*ib.* x. 24), *לפקוד* (*ib.* xxvi. 21), *ה* (*ib.* xxxvii. 16). No notice has been taken in this attempt of the points and strokes with which the letters are provided.

In conclusion, a query on p. 272 of the last number of the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW may here be answered. Domninus contains the two words *דם* "blood," and *ניע* "spitting" (comp. *Aruch*, s.v. *כח* ii.).

M. FRIEDLANDER.

P.S.—Whilst the above was in the hands of the printer, Dr. Neubauer, with his usual courtesy, sent me a photograph of four pages of these fragments, containing Isa. v. 8 to vii. 10, and xlv. 20 to xlviii. 11. I am thus enabled to add a few notes to the above, and sincerely thank the authorities of the Bodleian Library for their kindness.

1.—There is no special sign for *sheva*, whether simple or compound; a *segol* corresponds to the *sheva mobile* of our editions; before *chirek* or before *yod* the *sheva mobile* is replaced by *chirek*, and by *pathach* before a guttural with *pathach*. The compound *sheva* is represented by the simple vowel contained in the compound *sheva*. There is only one sign for both the long and the short *kamets*.

2.—*Dagesh*, both *forte* and *lene*, are marked by placing a semicircle over the letter in this position: *שֶׁ*. The absence of *dagesh* or *mappik* is marked thus: *שֵׁ*. Only *ה* with *dagesh* has the ordinary form (*הֶ*).

3.—The letters selected from each word are not always those that have the accent; in some cases even the letters provided with accents are not the accented syllables. The sign for *dagesh* is sometimes placed on the letter before that which is doubled.

4.—A word with two accents is divided by a hyphen in the middle of the word.

5.—ס takes the place of ש, the latter being marked by a dot inside the letter on the right (ש). The ס in וּבֹאוּ (xlv. 20) has the mark for *rafeh* (וּבֹאֵ). It is possible that the semicircle indicates in this case the absence of the vowel ו, and וּבֹא is here without the plural ending ו, like יִבֹּאוּ, xlv. 24.

6.—The beginning of a *sedra* is marked by a marginal ס, vi. 13, and xlvii. 6, unless the letter marks the pronunciation of ש occurring in the same line.

7.—To the above-mentioned *variæ lectiones* the following may be added:—v. 16, נִקְדָּשׁ; 20, הָיוּ; 27, לֹא; כְּרוּ; 28, קִשְׁתֵּיהֶם; vi. 5, אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ; 6, בְּמִלְחָמָם; vii. 6, מִבְּאֵל; xlv. 20, וּבֹא (?); 24, הַגִּבֹּרִים; xlvii. 5, הַדְּבִירִי; xlvii. 7, לֹא; 10, שׁוֹבְבֵהָ; 14, לַחֲמִם; xlviii. 9, אֶחָדָם.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH.

I.—THE NARRATIVES.

THE structure and arrangement of the mingled narratives and prophecies which occupy so large a portion of the book of Jeremiah, afford the student a problem at once fascinating and perplexing. These episodes are carefully dated; they are furnished with editorial introductions, detailing with some particularity the occasions to which they refer; and yet they present a sequence which is utterly without order. Or rather, while in some parts of the book there is an approach to chronological succession, in others it is apparently set at naught. A complete explanation of these inconsistencies is not now attainable, but we can see that they are in great measure due to the insertion in a framework belonging to the reign of Jehoiakim of materials of the age of Zedekiah, or of a still later date, at points which may have been determined by accident or convenience, by the circumstances under which these materials came to the hands of Jeremiah's editors, or by the physical structure of the manuscript which lay before them.